THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) The Federation of All Maharashtra Petrol Dealer's Association (FAMPEDA) had given a call for indefinite "No Purchase" Agitation commencing from the mid night of 17th September, 2006 all over Maharashtra.

(b) It has been informed by State Government of Maharashtra that they have not given any written assurance to FAMPEDA. However, in the interest of public, it had made appeal to the FAMPEDA not to resort to such agitation, so that smooth and sufficient supply of Petrol, Diesel, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is maintained. The strike was called off on 20.9.2006.

(c) Government of Maharashtra has revised the Sales Tax on High Speed Diesel *w.e.f.* 29/11/2006 from 33% to 28% in Mumbai/Thane and Navi Mumbai areas and from 30% to 25% in the rest of Maharashtra State.

Allocation of kerosene to Gujarat

2236. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intend to increase the allotment of kerosene to Gujarat on the lines of its increase in last two years to the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, by which date, decision on the demand of Gujarat for increasing allocation is being taken; and

(c) alternatively, when will free kerosene for open market be available at reasonable prices to ease out the kerosene problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) In accordance with the policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000, Kerosene (SKO) allocation for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) was reduced every year beginning 2001-02 till 2003-04, taking into account the number of LPG connections released in each State/Union Territory. While the initial allotment for 2004-05 was based on the criteria adopted hitherto, additional allocations were made during the year to meet emergent demand. For the year 2005-06, allocations have been maintained at the level of

2004-05, including additional allocations made during that year. For the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2006-07, allocations have been maintained at the level of 2005-06.

In view of requests received from various State Governments for increasing the SKO allocation, the Government of India commissioned a detailed study of Kerosene demand in the country, through the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in December 2004. NCAER submitted its report in October 2005. NCAER has *inter alia* recommended to restrict the subsidy on kerosene to BPL families only. The proposal to work out the modalities to implement this decision and for rationalizing the allocation of PDS kerosene among States/UTs is under the consideration of the Government.

(c) Under the existing system of marketing of free sale (white) kerosene followed by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), while the requirement of small consumers requiring less than full tank lorry load is met through their kerosene dealers, the requirement of consumers for more than one tank lorry load at a time is met directly by OMCs from their supply locations. The small customers can approach the identified kerosene dealers for their white SKO requirements subject to their fulfilling requiring formalities of storage permits end-use certificates, etc., in accordance with the guidelines in vogue.

Development of Buxar Nagar as a tourist place

†2237. SHRI ALI ANWAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any concrete scheme with Government for developing the Buxar Nagar in Bihar in view of its religious and historical importance in order to attract the tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government would formulate any scheme for the development of this city of mythological importance so that the Buxar Nagar can be developed a as tourist place?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.